

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA 1641 Rev. Fr. Daniel Mathewson – *Rector* **Lord's Day – April 22nd, 2018** Parish phone: 814-734-3801 Find us on the Web at: www.orthodoxcrossingville.org or on Face book: Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

CHRIST IS RISEN!

3rd SUNDAY OF PASCHA — Tone 2. Myrrhbearing Women. St. Theodore the Sykeote, Bishop of Anastasiopolis (613). Translation of the Relics of Rt. Blv. Vsevolod (in Baptism Gabriel), Prince of Pskov (1834). Apostles Nathaniel, Luke and Clement (1st c.). Ven. Vitalis (Vitalii) of Gaza (6th-7th c.).

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS: Newly Illumined- Rick and Samuel Those in need –Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Fr. John, Fr. Nicholas, Fr. Paul, Fr. George, Mat. Suzanne, Melissa, Meghan, Pearl, Karen, John, Mary, Stavros, Marilyn, Theona, Sara, Eugene, Ann, Thomas, Catherine, Timothy, Jeremiah, Mary, Renee, Delani, Emily, The Homebound..., Tanya, Richard, Helen, , Irene, Ruth, Josephine, William, Claudia... Travelers.. ...Catechumens –Christian ...Our Missionaries Abroad...Fr. David and Mt. Rozanne, Military servers...Greg ...Departed Orthodox...Newly Departed – John Bicko, John Sekel, Ann, Katherine. Vernon, Paul, James, Andrew, Peter, Paul, Margaret, Michael Mary Ann, Timothy special requests... Anthony, Ian, Paul, Daleen, Penni, James, Sean, Liam, Susan, James, Joel, Jen, Roger, Jasmine, Cassandra, Raquel, Zera Kimberly....

Today's Hymns Tone 2 Troparion (Resurrection)

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead. And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out://
“O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!”

Tone 2 Troparion (from the Pentecostarion)

The noble Joseph, when he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the Tree, wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spices, and placed it in a new tomb. But Thou didst arise on the third day, O Lord,// granting the world great mercy.

feel truly joyous, light, and peaceful.” Thus, having learned to leave all of his cares and those of his neighbors in the hands of the Lord, he patiently bore the cross of serving as abbot at the Patriarchate of Pech for the next six years.

If someone came to me and stated that they had found a method for controlling the world around them through disciplined thought, my first reaction would be, “Why would you want to do that?” This is the path to becoming like a demon – they seek to control us by whispering their thoughts in our minds.

This is the Christian path:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. (Phil. 2:5-8)

This alone is true life. ----Fr. Stephen Freeman

UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

This week:

+Sunday Church School TODAY

+Ladies Meeting following Coffee Hour and Church School

+Daily Vespers – Wednesday, April 25th – 6pm

+Great Vespers -- Saturday, April 28th – 6pm

+Men's Fellowship will sponsor a Mothers Day Brunch on Sunday May, 13th – All women of the parish are invited.

+Parish Rummage Sale will be held on May 2nd 9am-3pm.

+Holy Ascension services—Wed. May 16th-6pm GV and

Thursday, May 17th Divine Liturgy 9:30am

+Pentecost May 27th

Fr. Daniel and family would like to thank all who gave gifts this paschal season! Matushaka Gail would also like to extend a “Thank you’ to those who made goodies and gave flowers on the occasion her birthday!

MISSIONS TEAM

--Anyone wishing to serve as a missionary this summer sponsorships are available.

“Rejoice” scripture verse for the week:

1 Peter 1:8

(W)hom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you **rejoice** with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

prayers.” Good luck charms of every sort are as common here as in any place at any time. Just examine what hangs from rear-view mirrors in cars.

There are several things worth noting:

1. Your mind does not influence or control events. You are not a Jedi Master.
2. Thinking positively feels better than thinking negatively.
3. Thinking negatively often leads to “self-fulfilling” prophecies (not by making something happen but by nurturing a tendency within ourselves to cooperate with our fears)
4. Jesus did not come to remove suffering. He has entered suffering and united it to His Cross.

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs– heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together. (Rom. 8:16-17)

The various versions of mind power are all antithetical to the Cross.

They are not only not Christian they are anti-Christian. At the heart of sin is our desire to consume, to turn the world into an object of desire and master it. It breeds death in us and in those around us. At the heart of righteousness is the Cross, the willingness, for the sake of love, to unite ourselves with Christ and give ourselves to the Providence of God. The simple fact is that we do not know how to manage the world. We do not know what constitutes a good outcome. We do not have the knowledge to see the future, to understand and comprehend the collateral damage of our management. The only guarantee of the outcome of history (and our lives) is the goodwill of God.

The thoughts that lead to life are those of thanksgiving, always and for all things. This nurtures within us both faith and love and slowly carries us into the mystery of the Cross. In the words of St. Maximus the Confessor:

He who understands the mystery of the Cross and the Tomb knows the meaning of all things.

Among the more popular contemporary Orthodox books is *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*, built on the life and teachings of the Elder Thaddeus (Serbian). Read wrongly, it would seem to be an articulation of an Orthodox New Age doctrine. It is nothing of the sort. It is, instead, a lively account of the practice of Hesychasm (“silence”) in which we renounce our passions and acquire the Spirit of Peace. There is nothing within his teaching that suggests that our thoughts control the world around us. His practice can be seen in this short story:

As he related many years later to one of his spiritual children, at the time of this inner battle he suffered two nervous breakdowns as a result of the warfare against the temptations of fear, anxiety, and worry. His whole body trembled and he was, overall, in a very bad state. He took this as a warning from God and resolved to change his way of life and drop all earthly cares and worries. “I realized that we all worry about ourselves too much and that only he who leaves everything to the will of God can

Tone 2 Troparion (from the Pentecostarion)

The Angel came to the myrrhbearing women at the tomb and said:

“Myrrh is fitting for the dead;

but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption!

So proclaim: “The Lord is risen,//

granting the world great mercy.”

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

Tone 2 Kontakion (from the Pentecostarion)

Thou didst command the Myrrhbearers to rejoice, O Christ God.

By Thy Resurrection, Thou didst stop the lamentation of Eve, the first mother.

Thou didst command them to preach to Thine Apostles://

“The Savior is risen from the tomb!”

Tone 8 Kontakion (*Pascha*)

Thou didst descend into the tomb, O Immortal,

Thou didst destroy the power of death.

In victory Thou didst arise, O Christ God,

proclaiming, “Rejoice!” to the Myrrhbearing Women,//

granting peace to Thine Apostles, and bestowing

Resurrection on the fallen.

Tone 6 Prokeimenon (*Resurrection*)

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance! (*Ps 27/28:9*)

v: To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me! (Ps 27/28:1)

Tone 8 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: O Lord, Thou hast been gracious to Thy land; Thou hast turned back the captivity of Jacob. (Ps 84/85:1)

v: Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. (Ps 84/85:10)

Today’s Scripture Readings:

Acts 6:1-7 (Epistle)

Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they

had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Mark 15:43-16:8 (Gospel)

Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses observed where He was laid. Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?”

But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away – for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples – and Peter – that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.” So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

The Power in Thought—It’s not what you think

Among the dark little corners of the Orthodox world, particularly in its ethnic homelands, is a left-over trace of witchcraft (I don’t know what else to call it). It consists of a collection of superstitions, often mixed with semi-Orthodox notions. There are concerns about the “evil-eye,” “curses,” “spells,” and such. These things are “left-overs” in that they likely predate Christianity, having never disappeared from Europe’s earlier pagan past. These are not practices associated with dark powers, but simply folk practices rooted in bad theology.

It’s not just the Orthodox. My ancestors, Scots-Irish (certainly with a Protestant pedigree) were no stranger to such things. My mother’s mother was said to be able to “talk fire out of a burn,” and to “stop blood.” I was told that these little practices were based in the Scriptures, but they had a slightly occult feel about them. My great-grandfather

could “remove warts” in the same manner. The hills here in Appalachia are home to many such things.

There are, however, more popular, modern versions of all this, cleaned up and mainstreamed. Much of it goes under the heading of “positive thought” and “successful living.” *All of it is about exercising power over the world around us.* It is contrary to the Christian faith. This is not a modern problem: it’s as old as it gets. But it is also wonderfully American.

The mid-19th century (that most formative of all American eras) saw writers such as Horatio Alger (author of numerous “rags to riches” tales), and Samuel Smiles (author of *Self-Help*), begin to popularize the American power of the mind. The opening line in Smiles’ work, “Heaven helps those who help themselves,” borrowed from Ben Franklin, sounds a key sentiment in the American mythology of the time. Modernity was about *progress*, both as a society and as an individual. The formula was to be positive, work hard, be honest and patient. Of course, the great mass of self-help men rushed off to the gold fields of the Wild West and lived lives that were everything but honest. We self-helped ourselves to Native American lands and any exploitable wealth that could be found.

The desire to succeed, to move up the ladder, became a major theme in the American psyche. We became the “land of opportunity.” Those who failed had only themselves to blame. Of course, all of this was marketed (particularly in books). The 20th century saw the “positive thinkers”: Dale Carnegie (*How to Win Friends and Influence People*, 1936), James Allen (*As a Man Thinketh*, 1902), Napoleon Hill (*Think and Grow Rich*, 1937), and Norman Vincent Peale (*The Power of Positive Thinking*, 1952). Peale’s book has been a perennial best-seller. These “pioneers” held that our thoughts make us who we are, and have the power to shape the world around us, attract money, love, success, etc. They are the foundations of today’s “prosperity gospel,” the Evangelical world’s version of popular witchcraft.

Some, like Peale, were “Christian” teachers, others holding to something like a Divine Universal Mind that could be drawn on for benefit. Most of these same ideas are gathered today under the banner of “New-Age Teaching,” and carry a cache of “spirituality.” But it’s the same spiritualization of the American Dream and mythologization of magical power.

The heart of magic (and witchcraft) is the desire to control the outcome of the world around us. In that sense, the entire modern project is magic by brute force. We bend the world to our will.

Many people are unable to distinguish between this and Christianity. For them, God exists in order be persuaded to meet our needs (and our desires). Heaven itself becomes but one more desire (the thought that my enjoyment might never end). Social media abounds with prayer requests, often under the heading of “sending out thoug